



The Beacon

PIEDRAS BLANCAS LIGHT STATION OUTSTANDING NATURAL AREA
~PART OF THE CALIFORNIA COASTAL NATIONAL MONUMENT~

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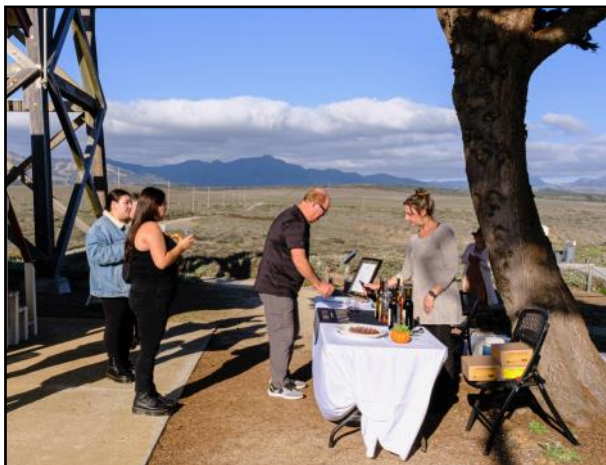
JUL - SEP 2023

DINNER & LIBATIONS FOR THE STATION: A WINE AND DINNER FUNDRAISER

Dinner & Libations for the Station is an annual fundraising event to benefit the restoration work of the Piedras Blancas Light Station. Join us on Saturday, October 7 at 4 p.m. for an evening of wine, dinner, live music, and a silent auction, all while enjoying the beauty of Piedras Blancas. Docents will be available to answer questions about the history and ecology of the light station, and guests are free to walk the half-mile trail around the grounds or check out the lighthouse and other historic buildings.

Enjoy wine donated and poured by Harmony Cellars and dinner and dessert served by Central Coast Pizza Trolley. Kenny Taylor will perform live, and participating in the silent auction will help raise funds for the light station's restoration.

Tickets are \$100 and include entry to the light station, wine, dinner, dessert, and a Piedras Blancas logo wine glass to take home.



Guests from last year's Dinner & Libation enjoy wine donated and poured by Harmony Cellars. Photo by Gary O'Neill.

Gates to the light station will open at 3:30 p.m. and the event begins at 4 p.m. and ends at 6:30 p.m. Please dress in layers, as the weather at the light station can be unpredictable.

If you have questions, please contact Harmony Cellars at 805-927-1625 or the Piedras Blancas Light Station Association at contact.pblsa@gmail.com.

Buy tickets and find more information at piedrasblancas.org/events.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, September 29, 2-3 p.m.
Motus Wildlife Tracking System
Presentation by USGS staff.
Reservation required.

Saturday, October 7, 4-6:30 p.m.
Dinner & Libations for the Station
Fundraiser. Tickets available.

Saturday, October 28, 6-8 p.m.
Ghosts of the Light Station: Full
Moon Hike. Reservation required.

**Saturday, November 4,
4:30-7 p.m.**
Golden Hour Photo Workshop
Tickets available.

**Friday, November 17,
6:30-7:30 p.m.**
Starry Night: Astronomy at the Light
Station. Reservation required.

Friday, December 1, 8-10 p.m.
Piedras Blancas After Dark: Guided
Night Hike. Reservation required.

**Saturday, December 9,
6:30-8:30 a.m.**
Break of Dawn Photo Workshop.
Tickets available.

Learn more about upcoming
events, purchase tickets, and make
reservations at
piedrasblancas.org/events



The Beacon is a joint publication of the Piedras Blancas Light Station Association and the Bureau of Land Management. The PBLSA is a nonprofit partner of the BLM and provides support for the restoration, conservation, interpretation, and stewardship of the unique natural, historical, and cultural resources at the Piedras Blancas Light Station.
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MOTUS WILDLIFE TRACKING SYSTEM INSTALLED AT LIGHT STATION

The USGS recently installed a Motus Wildlife Tracking System at the Piedras Blancas Light Station. The system will pick up any organism with a VHF tag traveling within a few miles of the light station and make that information available on a publicly-accessible website.

On Friday, September 29, 2-3 p.m., Laney White from USGS will present more information on the Motus system and how to access the website. The presentation will be in the fog signal building at the light station and is open to the public. Space is limited, so reservations are required. Visit piedrasblancas.org/events to register.

TEMPORARY MANAGER TAMMY FAUST AT THE LIGHT STATION FOR THE SUMMER

Earlier this summer, Piedras Blancas Light Station welcomed Tamara (Tammy) Faust as acting National Conservation Area Manager. She substituted for Ryan Cooper from May 24 through August 24, overseeing Outdoor Recreation Specialist Jodie Nelson and Park Ranger Bre Brown, while working alongside them as a member of this hard-working team.

Tammy came to the light station from New Mexico, where she was born and raised. While she lives in New Mexico, she works for the BLM California Desert District in Palm Springs as a Project Manager. Her job there consists of working on renewable energy and mining projects. Previous to being a Project Manager, she started her career with BLM in 2008 in the Farmington, New Mexico, field office at the front desk. Her career progressed through positions as a Production Accountability Technician, Realty Specialist, and a 90-day detail as Supervisor of Land and Mineral records at the New Mexico State Office.

Tammy loves to travel and has spent time in Italy and Greece, as well as Mexico, the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands, and much of the United States. Piedras Blancas Light Station was on her bucket list to see the next time she came to California, so when she had the chance to apply for the 120-day detail as temporary manager, she couldn't pass it up. "My hands shook", she laughs, as she thinks of the day she found out she was selected. Early on the first day of her detail, she remembers driving along the coastline with disbelief that this was happening. Then in the distance she saw the white tower rising above the landscape and thought, "wow." As she entered the light station, she saw elephant seals molting on the beach and heard the screech of peregrine falcons and the faint barking of sea lions.

Tammy laughs when she tells people of her "forced exercise" of walking the light station's trails, greeting the sea life with bird calls overhead and rabbits and squirrels on the trail. When asked what was her favorite animal at Piedras Blancas, she hems and haws before throwing up her hands and saying there are just too many. But sea otters will always hold a special place in her heart.

Thank you, Tammy, for your contributions to the light station this summer!



Photo by Tammy Faust.

DO YOU FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

Keep up with Piedras Blancas Light Station online by following us on Facebook and Instagram. Follow [@piedrasblancaslightstation](https://www.facebook.com/PiedrasBlancasLightStation)



<https://www.facebook.com/PiedrasBlancasLightStation>

<https://www.instagram.com/piedrasblancaslightstation>

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED AT THE LIGHT STATION

Would you like to help preserve a historical landmark while enjoying beautiful coastal scenery? We currently have a need for volunteers in multiple roles. Are you interested in delving into the history of the light station and sharing that information with our visitors, or would you prefer to help in the gift shop? Some volunteers like working on restoration projects or helping with native plant rehabilitation, while others help out with Friday-morning school tours. Whatever your interests, we'd be glad to have your help. If you'd like more information about volunteering at the light station, contact Jodie Nelson, our Outdoor Recreation Planner, at PiedrasBlancasTours@gmail.com.



Volunteers clear plants in front of the lighthouse to make room for seaside poppies.

LIGHT STATION PARK RANGER SHARES INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS WITH STATE PARKS VISITORS

Nothing says summer quite like camping! At local state parks, campers often have the option of joining weekly interpretive programs. This summer, California State Parks invited Piedras Blancas Light Station staff to give a monthly campfire program at Hearst San Simeon State Park. Throughout the summer, Ranger Bre presented three different one-hour programs on the natural and cultural history of the Central Coast in the amphitheater in the San Simeon Creek Campground. Campers also got the chance to roast marshmallows and play fun campfire games.

In June, Bre introduced visitors to the different owl species on the central coast and their incredible adaptations in a program titled "Owls are a Hoot!". In July, Bre led a program called "Our Neighbor: The Peregrine Falcon" that chronicled the conservation story of peregrine falcons, both across the nation and locally. In August, Bre gave her final campfire program of the summer, "Survival: the Piedras Blancas Light Station Story", that detailed the history of the light station.

Here at Piedras Blancas, we believe that interpretation and education inspire people to care for their public lands. This is integral in our approach to every light station tour. We are excited for the chance to spark wonder and inspire a sense of stewardship for a wider audience through these campfire programs! We are always looking for ways to build a positive relationship with our local community and are grateful for this opportunity to engage with over one hundred people through accessible, free programming. Of course, we invited all of the audience members to visit Piedras Blancas Light Station on our regularly scheduled tours, and hope to see many of them soon.



State Parks Interpreter Francesca Manheim introduces BLM Park Ranger Bre Brown (above). Bre talks about peregrine falcons at the San Simeon State Park campground amphitheater (below). Photos by Tammy Faust.



We would like to offer a very special thanks to California State Parks for inviting Piedras Blancas Light Station to take part in such wonderful events! We look forward to continuing this partnership in the future.

DID YOU MISS AN ISSUE?

Check out the archive of *The Beacon* on our website at piedrasblancas.org/newsletter. We have digital versions of the quarterly newsletter going back to 2015.

VICTORIAN KEEPERS' HOUSES: PHOTOS OLD AND NEW

When the lighthouse was built in 1874, space was also needed for the keepers of the lighthouse and their families. The first keepers' house, a duplex, was built in 1876 and housed three keepers and their families. When the fog signal building was added in 1905, another keeper was needed, so an additional cottage was built for the head keeper. In 1960, when the Coast Guard built new housing, the duplex was torn down and the head keeper's cottage sold for \$1 and

moved to Cambria, where it is now a vacation rental.

A committee of Piedras Blancas Light Station Association board members and BLM staff, with the assistance of a generous anonymous donor, has started the planning process to reconstruct the Victorian-era keepers' houses as part of the overall plan to restore the light station to its period of greatest historical significance.



Duplex keepers' house 1910.



Head keeper's cottage, 1940s.



Posts and rope outline the site of the duplex keepers' house today.



The site of the head keeper's cottage today.

JOIN THE PBLSA BOARD MEETINGS ON THE 4TH WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH

The Piedras Blancas Light Station Association meets on the 4th Wednesday of the month at 6 p.m. (except for November and December). We are currently holding virtual Zoom meetings.

The public is always welcome to listen, ask questions, or voice concerns, so please email us if you would like to participate. Meeting minutes are published on the pedrasblancas.org website on the About Us page.

The board consists of people from varied backgrounds and education who live in different parts of the county. We are always open to speaking with anyone who is interested in becoming a board member.

Please email if you are interested in the board or have questions concerning the Piedras Blancas Light Station Association: contact.pblsa@gmail.com.

LIGHTHOUSE NEIGHBORS

Point San Luis Lighthouse

(58 miles south of PBLs)
Located in Avila Beach. For a complete listing of guided tours and special events, visit:
PointSanLuisLighthouse.org
or call 805-540-5771.

Point Sur Light Station

(65 miles north of PBLs)
Visit their website: PointSur.org
or call 831-625-4419 for the current tour schedule.
No reservations; first come, first served.

Point Pinos Lighthouse

(90 miles north of PBLs)
Located in Pacific Grove. Open Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. For hours and more information, visit:
PointPinosLighthouse.org.



TRIVIA TIME!

Blue whales are the largest animal to ever live on earth. How tall is the Piedras Blancas Lighthouse compared to the length of a blue whale?



100 feet

Originally, the PBLS lighthouse was 100 feet from the base to the top of the ventilator ball. A lightning rod also extended from the ventilator ball.



100 feet

Historically, blue whales grew to 100 feet in length. Today, blue whales in the northern hemisphere average 85-90 feet.



70 feet

Currently, the lighthouse is 70 feet tall, so the average blue whale is longer than the current lighthouse is tall.

How many bricks were used in the lighthouse? *At the time the lighthouse was constructed, the cost estimate was for 480,000 bricks. However, a change in the design resulted in a savings of 120,000 bricks, so the estimated number of bricks used in the tower is 360,000.*

What weighs more—the lighthouse or a blue whale? *On average, a blue whale weighs 200,000-300,000 pounds. If the lighthouse bricks weighed 4 pounds each, then 360,000 bricks = 1,440,000 lbs. In addition to bricks, there was also the weight of the lens, ironwork, etc. There's no doubt that both the original lighthouse and the current truncated version weigh much more than a blue whale.*

Which is bigger—a male blue whale or a female blue whale? *Like most baleen whales, female blue whales are longer and weigh more. The record breaking blue whales, in terms of length and weight, are female.*

PIEDRAS BLANCAS LIGHT STATION TOURS

Tours are offered year-round on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. From June 15 through September 1, tours are offered daily except Wednesdays and Sundays. There are no tours on federal holidays. Tours last about two hours and include the historic Piedras Blancas lighthouse and support buildings along with a half-mile interpretive trail that provides spectacular ocean views and opportunities to view wildlife. Make tour reservations online through our website: piedrasblancas.org. Meet at the former Piedras Blancas Motel located 1.5 miles north of the light station at 9:45 a.m.

Please do not wait at the gate to the light station!

For information, email PiedrasBlancasTours@gmail.com or call 805-927-7361.

Groups of 10 or more,
please make advance
arrangements.

\$10 for adults, \$5 ages
6-17, no fee for children
5 and under.

Tours may be
cancelled on the day
of the tour due to
inclement weather.



Dress warmly and wear comfortable walking shoes. Sorry, no pets!



Piedras Blancas Light Station Assn.
P.O. Box 127
San Simeon, CA 93452-0127
805-927-3719
membership.pblsa@gmail.com

All memberships include *The Beacon*, our quarterly newsletter.

___ \$50 Friend of the Lighthouse
(1 complimentary tour)

___ \$100 Acting Keeper
(2 complimentary tours)

___ \$250 Assistant Keeper
(4 complimentary tours)

___ \$500 Principal Keeper
(engraved brick)

___ \$1000 Superintendent of Lights
(engraved brick & private tour for up to 6 people)

___ Donation \$ _____

**HELP RESTORE
AND PRESERVE
THE PIEDRAS
BLANCAS LIGHT
STATION BY
JOINING PBLSA**

Name: _____

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Email: _____

Please make checks payable to PBLSA, or join online at shop.piedrasblancas.org to pay by credit card.

Thank you for your support!



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